

PROCLAMATION 4115

National Week of Concern for Americans Who Are Prisoners of War or Missing in Action

By the President of the United States of America

March 10, 1972

A Proclamation

1,623 American servicemen and some 50 U.S. civilians are now either missing in action or being held captive by North Vietnam and its allies. At the end of this month, the first men to be taken prisoner will begin their ninth year in captivity. This is the longest internment ever endured by American fighting men; it is also one of the most brutal.

The POW/MIA story of this long and difficult war is a tragic one:

The enemy continues adamant in his refusal even to identify all the Americans being held. He continues to flout the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention which establishes minimum humane standards for treatment of prisoners—a treaty to which North Vietnam is a signatory, just as are South Vietnam and the United States and 128 other nations. He continues to block impartial inspection of the prison camps. He continues to deny repatriation for seriously sick and wounded prisoners. He continues to ignore the prisoners' right to regular correspondence with their families.

6 UST 3316.

And so those families suffer in spirit hardly less than their men suffer in the flesh. They live in a nightmare of unremitting anguish and gnawing concern. Many cannot even know whether their loved ones are still alive; those who do know this much, must live with their additional knowledge of the cruel conditions in which the prisoners exist.

Each new chapter in this outrage has stiffened the American people's determination to see justice done. We have stood and will continue to stand united as a nation in our concern and compassion for the prisoners and missing men. We mean to see this matter through.

Concern for the prisoners' plight, moreover, has spread to the people of goodwill around the world—and we may be confident that their humanitarian efforts, though so far rebuffed as callously as our own, will still continue as steadfastly as our own.

The United States has spared no effort—by diplomacy, by negotiation, by every other means—to secure fair treatment of our captive sons and brothers and to obtain their ultimate freedom.

As we set aside a special week of national concern for this continuing tragedy, and a special day of prayer for its resolution, we do so with a determination to persist in this effort—for principle, for peace, for the sake of these brave men and their parents and brothers and sisters and wives and the children some have never seen.

Ante, p. 61.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICHARD NIXON, President of the United States of America, as requested by the Congress in Senate Joint Resolution 189, do hereby designate the period of March 26 through April 1, 1972, as National Week of Concern for Prisoners of War/Missing in Action, and Sunday, March 26, 1972, as a National Day of Prayer for the lives and safety of these men.

I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this week with such appropriate ceremonies and activities as will stir and sustain widespread concern for the missing men and prisoners, nourish the patient courage of their loved ones, and—above all—hasten the day of their safe return to home and freedom.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-sixth.



PROCLAMATION 4116

International Book Year, 1972

March 13, 1972

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Books and libraries are among mankind's greatest sources of enlightenment. They contain the cultural inheritance of our forefathers and the core of our educational system. In the words of Thomas Carlyle: "All that Mankind has done, thought, gained or been; it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books."

As this Nation approaches the beginning of its third century, we should remind ourselves that nothing in our heritage is more precious than the